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Talking Points for the NIO on Lebanon
22 April 1983

Domestic Threats

President Amin Gemayel continues to hold on to his fragile political consensus despite the slow pace of negotiations with Israel and the growing perception by non-Christian domestic factions that Lebanese concessions could be substantial. Gemayel's tenuous support, however, does not insure the end of violence between confessional groups and political parties.

- Violence between a variety of pro- and anti-Syrian groups around Tripoli has subsided in recent weeks, but could flareup again at any time.
- The situation between the Phalange-dominated Lebanese Forces militia and the Druze in the Shuf and Alayh districts outside Beirut remains tense, with both sides expressing a desire to resume the fighting once the Israelis give up control of the area.
- Attacks against Israeli troops are escalating throughout areas under their occupation.

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The Lebanese Forces

The Lebanese Forces militia--with about 3,000 regular fighters--continues to be the dominate force in Lebanese politics, but its ability to dictate policy to the central government or seriously threaten Amin Gemayel has diminished.

- Gemayel has taken advantage of leadership and morale problems within the Lebanese Forces and the rift with its Israeli benefactor to maneuver the militia into a series of compromises with the central government.
- These compromises, such as the deployment of the Lebanese Army into the militia stronghold of East Beirut and the government's takeover of the illegal ports that provided revenue to keep the militia in business, have bolstered Gemayel's credibility with non-Christians and at the same time revealed the vulnerability of the Lebanese Forces.

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The Left

Nevertheless, fear of Maronite/Phalange domination of the Lebanese political system is the main domestic issue fueling the activities of leftist groups in Lebanon. These groups were seriously weakened after the Israeli siege of Beirut and the departure of the PLO.

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-- While most leftist organizations continue to exist as political entities, their military capabilities were either destroyed or so severely limited that most do not pose a credible threat to the government.

-- The dissolution of the National Movement--the coalition of leftist Muslim groups--has virtually eliminated coordination among groups, limited their potential for action, and left each more vulnerable to right-wing Christian forces. [redacted]

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Only the Druze-dominated Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) militia--perhaps 2,000 strong--is capable of confronting the Lebanese Forces.

-- The Druze and the Lebanese Forces have been engaged in nearly constant battle since last fall.

-- While these clashes have serious implications for further destabilizing Lebanon, the Druze militia does not represent a direct threat to the central government, the multinational peacekeeping force (MNF), or to other US interests. [redacted]

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The Murabitun, a Nasirite group under the leadership of Ibrahim Qulaylat, has maintained a low profile since the events of last summer.

-- [redacted] the departing PLO turned over some of their heavy weapons to the Murabitun.

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-- Despite this, the organization continues to be weak and is unlikely to be able to resume military activities for some time. [redacted]

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The Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP) militia

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-- Despite its current protection by Syria, the SSNP--like other leftist groups--appears unwilling to take any action that would jeopardize its political existence in the future.

-- The main concern of the SSNP is to protect itself from a Lebanese Forces vendetta following Syrian withdrawal. The SSNP was implicated in the assassination of Bashir Gemayel.

-- The SSNP militia currently numbers no more than 1,500.

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The Lebanese Communist Party no longer has an organized militia. The group disbanded following the Israeli occupation, and militia members reverted to civilian status.

- The LCP does have about 100 trained fighters, who are permitted, as individuals, to take advantage of local opportunities such as cooperating with the Druze or participating in anti-Israeli activity.

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the Communist Action Organization leader Muhsin Ibrahim said in March 1983 that it is too early, to create a new leftist organization in Lebanon to replace the National Movement. He believes the first objective of leftists is to work against the Israeli occupation and to thwart US policy in Lebanon.

- The CAO currently has no active military force or salaried personnel. Its present strength probably does not exceed 1,500.
- The organization's membership is largely Shia youth who joined for economic gain rather than out of ideological commitment.

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The Shia

Iranian-backed Shia extremists will continue to be the main security threat to the US and Western European presence in Lebanon. The decentralization that has resulted from the plethora of radical Shia splinter groups makes efforts to control their activities more difficult.

- Radical Shia believe that attacking the "props" of the Lebanese government--the MNF and US presence--is a more effective means of destabilizing the country than moving against the central government directly.
- It is not clear whether the Islamic Struggle Organization, which has claimed responsibility for the bombing of the US Embassy in Beirut, is an actual group or a name of convenience used by radicals

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'There are two major radical groups that cooperate closely with Iran.

- The larger group, under the command of Husayn Musawi, is located in Balabakk and has 300-400 followers. This faction also cooperates closely with Syria.
- The less well known group with probably a few score members is under the leadership of Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah. This group, located in Beirut's southern suburbs, may have been responsible for the kidnapping of American University President David Dodge. There are some indications that Fadlallah may also have been involved in the Syrian-sponsored bombing of the Iraqi Embassy in Beirut in December 1981.
- Members of Fadlallah's group may have carried out the bombing of the US Embassy. [redacted]

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THE MAIN LEBANESE POLITICAL GROUPS

Independent Muslims

- Al Amal**
Imam Musa Sadr; missing since September 1978 and Nabih Barri; Shia
 - Islamic Coalition**
Sa'ib Salam and Rashid Karami; Sunni
 - Islamic Grouping**
Shafiq Wazzan; Sunni
 - Democratic Socialist Party**
Kamal al-Assad; Shia
- "National Movement"**
(Primarily Muslim Left)
- Progressive Socialist Party (PSP)**
Walid Junblat; Druze
 - Independent Nasirite Movement (Murabitun)**
Ibrahim Qulaylat; Beirut Sunni
 - Communist Action Organization**
Muhsin Ibrahim; extreme left Shia
 - Communist Party of Lebanon**
Nicola Shawi and George Hawi; pro-USSR Greek Orthodox Christian
 - Baath Party-Iraqi Wing**
Abd al-Majid Rafai; Sunni
 - Nasirite Corrective Movement**
Isam al-Arab; extreme left Sunni
 - Syrian Social Nationalist Party (PPS or SSNP)**
Inam Raad; left Greek Orthodox Christian
 - Popular Nasirite Organization**
Mustafa Sa'ad; Sunni
 - Baath Party-Syrian Wing**
Assam Qansu; Sunni, pro-Syrian
 - Arab Socialist Union**
Abd al-Rahim Murad; Sunni

National Front

- (Pro-Syrian Left)
- Nasirite Organization**
(Union of Working Peoples Forces)
Kamal Shatila; Sunni
 - Arab Democratic Party**
Hassib al-Khatib; Tripoli-based Alawites

Moderate Christians

- Independent Parliamentary Bloc**
Sim'an al-Duwayhi and Butrus Harb; Maronite
- Pro-Syrian Christians**
 - Zgharta Front**
Sulayman Franjiyah; Conservative northern Maronite
- "Lebanese Front"**
(Primarily Christian Right)
 - Phalange Party (Kataib)**
Pierre Jumayyil and Amin Jumayyil Maronite and Greek Catholic
 - National Liberal Party**
Camille Shamun (President of Lebanese Front); Maronite
 - Kaslik Front**
(Order of Maronite Monks) Bulus Na'man, Maronite Clergy, extreme right
 - Guardians of the Cedars**
Etienne Saqr AKA Abu Arz; extremist Maronite
 - Al Tanzim**
George Adwan; extremist Maronite

Independent Christian Right

- Maronite League**
Shakir Abu Sulayman; Maronite
- National Bloc**
Raymond Eddé; Maronite, anti-Syrian
- Free Lebanon Movement**
Major Sa'ad Haddad, Maronite/Shia, pro-Israeli

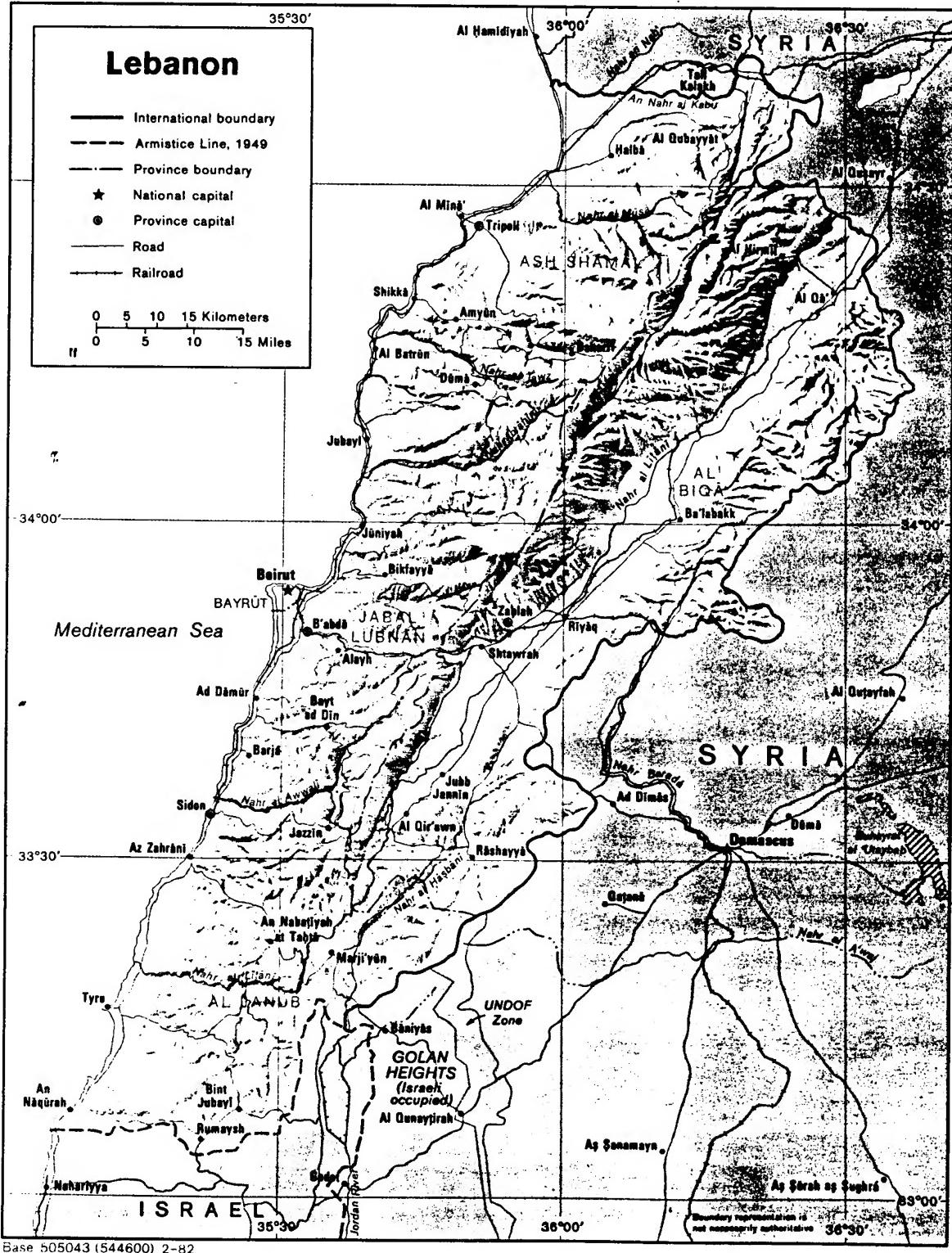
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**Lebanese Politico-Religious Groups—1981
Estimates ^a**

	Thousand Persons	Percent of Population
Lebanese		
Arab Muslims	1,150	44
Sunni	550	
Shia	600	
Arab Christians	750	28
Maronite	390	
Greek Orthodox	240	
Greek Catholic (Melkite)	52	
Protestant	68	
Druze	190	7
Non-Arabs	151	6
Armenian Orthodox/Catholic	150	
Jewish	1	
Palestinians (roughly one-third Arab Christian and two-thirds Arab Muslim)	400	15
Residents in Lebanon	2,641	100
Lebanese expatriates (people holding Lebanese citizenship or dual citizenship abroad, mostly in Western Hemisphere)	1,250	
Total	circa 3.9 million	

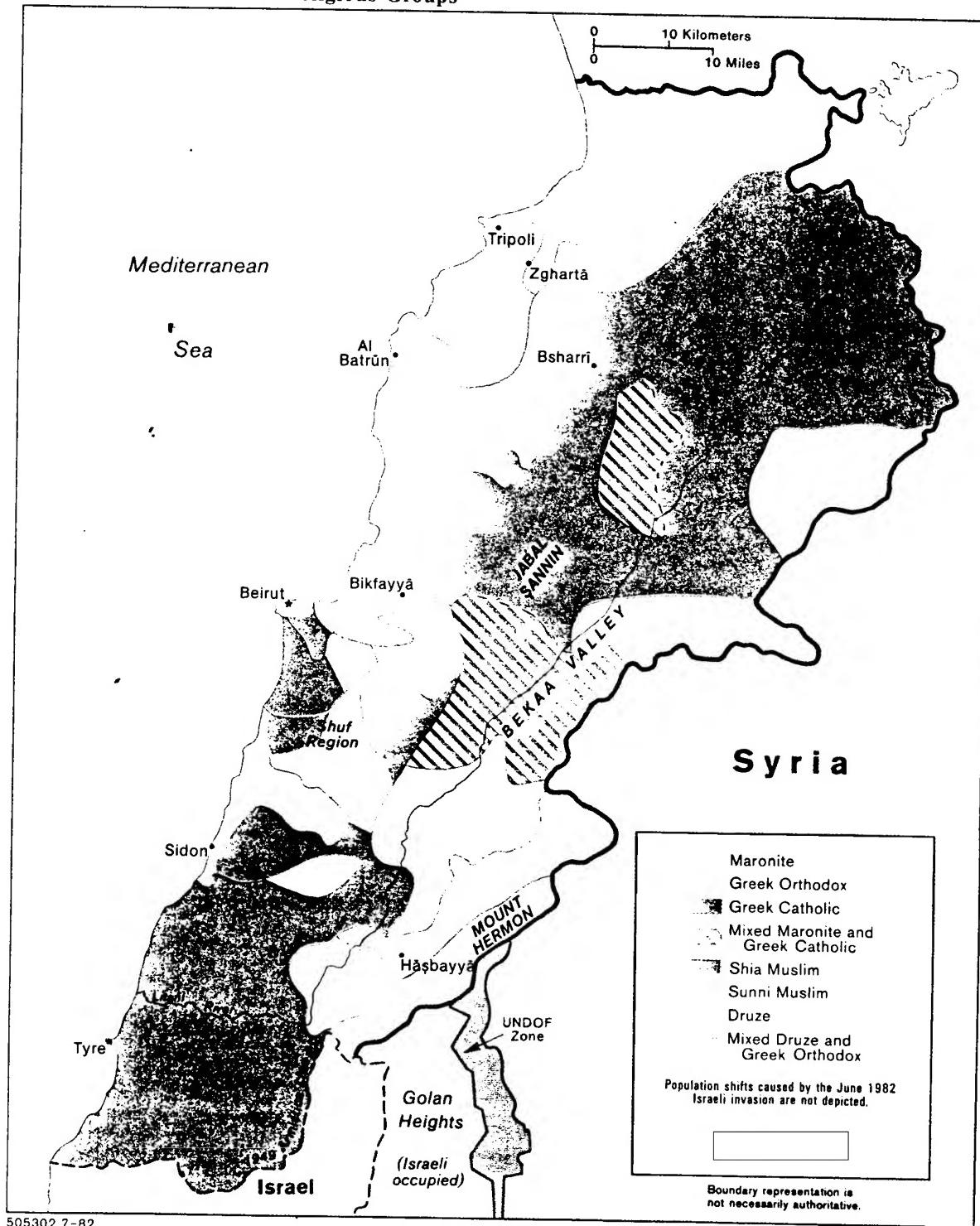
^a US demographers derive these figures from the Lebanese Government's 1969 population estimate based on the 1932 census with adjustments for births, deaths, and emigration. The individual politico-religious groups have customarily inflated their population statistics to such a degree that US officials do not accept even "official" Lebanese Government figures without reservation. The Christians frequently report their population figures to include many of the Lebanese expatriates, many of whom are Christians, in order to maintain the traditional ratio between Christians and Muslims.

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Figure 1
Lebanon: Distribution of Religious Groups



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